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10. (Amended) A method of representing a plurality of objects appearing in a still or video image, by processing signals corresponding to the images, the method comprising, for each object outline, determining if there are significant changes in curvature in the object outline, and, if there are significant changes in curvature of the object outline, then deriving a shape descriptor using a method as claimed in claim 1 and; if there are no significant changes in curvature of the object outline, then deriving a shape descriptor including at least said additional parameter reflecting the shape of the object outline.

12. (Amended) A method of searching for an object in a still or video image by processing signals corresponding to images, the method comprising inputting a query in the form of a two-dimensional outline, deriving a descriptor of said outline using a method as claimed in claim 1, and comparing said query descriptor with each descriptor for stored objects using a matching procedure using the CSS values and the additional parameters to derive a similarity measure, and selecting and displaying at least one result corresponding to an image containing an object for which the comparison indicates a degree of similarity between the query and said object.

15. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 13 where $a=1$ when there are no CSS peaks associated with either outline and $a=0$ when at least one outline has a CSS peak.

17. (Amended) An apparatus adapted to implement a method as claimed in claim 1.

18. (Amended) A computer program for implementing a method as claimed in claim

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19. (Amended) A computer system programmed to operate according to a method as claimed in claim 1.

20. (Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing computer-executable process steps for implementing a method as claimed in claim 1.--